

No 7

*The BENEVOLENCE incumbent on us,
as Men and Christians, Considered.*

I N A
S E R M O N

Preached at the

A S S I Z E S

HELD AT

Taunton, April 1. 1746.

Before the Honourable

Sir THOMAS DENNISON,

And

Sir MICHAEL FOSTER,

} Knights,

Justices of his Majesty's Court of King's Bench.

By SAMUEL LOBB, M. A.
Rector of Hungerford Farley.

*Published at the REQUEST of the High-
Sheriff, and Gentlemen of the Grand-Jury.*

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T O T H E

Right Worshipful, and his Honoured Friend,

JOHN HALLIDAY, Esq;
HIGH-SHERIFF of the County of
Somerset ;

A N D T O

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Gentlemen of the GRAND-JURY ;

This S E R M O N, is, with all Respect,
Inscribed,

B Y

Their much Obliged, and most

Obedient humble Servant,

SAMUEL LOBB.

TO THE

Worshipful, and his Honourable

JOHN HALLIDAY, Esq.
High Sheriff of the County of

AND TO

Indorse	{	Canon Seabrook,	John Seabrook,
		Robert Babb,	John Seabrook,
		Thomas Patten,	John Seabrook,
		John Seabrook,	John Seabrook,
		John Seabrook,	John Seabrook,
		Thomas Brown,	John Seabrook,

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of

1870.

D Y

Witness my hand and seal this 1st day of

1870.

JOHN HALLIDAY

 MATT. V. 44.

*But I say unto you, Love your enemies ;
bless them that curse you ; do good
to them that hate you ; and pray
for them which despitefully use you,
and persecute you.*

IT is the wickedness of man, much more than his weakness, that hath rendered Morals so intricate a study ; swelling it into so many tedious volumes ; and, by the suspicions it occasions in us one of another, making the opinions of the deceased of so much importance to be appealed to ; while there are persons living, of capacity, attainments, and integrity, perhaps in this Assembly, equal to those of any that have gone before them.

But could man, by any means, be brought back to his primitive rectitude, to be uniformly the creature he came out of the hands of his great and good Creator, what lumber would those volumes become, and how need-

less the toil, that is now so necessary to understand, and make a proper use of them! that is, when the whole of our duty to one another would be so intelligibly comprehended in the few words of *loving our neighbour as ourselves*, as to need no expostor; and so adapted to our inclinations, as to be in no danger of being transgressed.

But, alas! this is a change not to be expected in our day; when men are under the influence they are, not only of so many natural desires indulged to excess, but artificial ones of their own creating; and abuse, as they do, the Reason given them to direct them to their true happiness, by employing it in pursuit of a false one, to the occasioning all the crimes and quarrels that disturb the world; and to the rendering those numerous laws and decrees, and reasonings upon them, unavoidable; of which we are so apt to complain.

In such a situation, all that can be expected on man's part, towards the bringing about a reformation so desirable, must be from the endeavours of the best-affected to their fellow-creatures, to recommend and promote a due regard to those principles in our nature, on the proper influence of which depends our perfection as social creatures; and from their fervent prayers to God, for his blessing on every such endeavour.

One of those principles is, that general Benevolence recommended in the text, that takes in every fellow-creature, without excepting either God's enemies, or our own; cursers, haters of their fellow-creatures, malicious persons, and persecutors, being manifestly both.

God grant, that every one of us, who shall be convinced of our obligation to this Benevolence, may feel the proper force of it through our lives; and particularly those of us, during these Assizes, on whose regard to truth, justice, and humanity, so much will be depending!

For the better understanding a law of so much importance to the happiness of mankind, it may be proper to premise, That, as the wise and good Author of our beings intended us for an happiness suitable to our nature; and, making us rational creatures, designed us to be social ones, and Himself to be our Supreme Governor; in consequence of which, there would be necessary to our obtaining that happiness, as well a conscientious discharge of the obligations that should arise from the relation we were to stand in to Himself, and one another, as consideration and prudence, with regard to our own private interest: to excite us to the several actions that should be requisite to these different purposes, He wisely implanted in us affections adapted to each; for the

securing our own happiness, Self-love; for the promoting one another's, Benevolence; and for the approving ourselves to Himself, Piety; and that each of these affections might have its proper weight and influence, hath furnished all men with a Moral sense, Reason, and the principles of Natural religion; and over and, above these, us, Christians, with those of Revealed, to direct them.

The importance of these means to this purpose, will appear, on a small attention to the different tendencies of these affections, as they are differently conducted: for to instance in each; the affection of Piety, under an improper direction, may lead to manifest cruelty, both to ourselves and others; to ourselves, by such mortifications as shall embitter and shorten our lives, without any good end to be answered thereby; and to others, by the most iniquitous of all sorts of zeal, persecution of them for matters of mere opinion: in like manner, the affection of Benevolence, without a due consideration of the different persons that have a claim to it, and of what nature are their several claims, may lead to a tenderness and lenity, that, were they general, would be a fatal encouragement of crimes; to the subversion of all government, and to the destruction of all piety in the ill-disposed. And lastly, Self-love, in proportion as it is inordinately

inordinately indulged, must lessen our Benevolence, and by that very circumstance alter the nature of our Piety; the fatal tendency of which indulgence is manifest in the numberless crimes it is the source of.

The perfection therefore of our Character, as creatures endued with these affections, and furnished with these helps for their Direction, must consist in our giving to them their proper scope, to the making them of accord with one another in answering to God, and to our fellow-creatures, their several demands upon us, and thereby upon the whole procuring the greatest happiness to ourselves. And it is the possibility of their not thus according, and of their being thus directed, that renders them proper matter for command: the commanding any affection implying an obligation to give an attention to the objects, that are adapted to the exciting it, which, without such command, might be neglected; whereas, the supposition of the affection being natural, implies, that, on a due attention, it must be felt of course.

There is this further observable concerning the nature of the affections, that respect God, and our fellow-creatures; that the consequence of their being natural is, that they must be disinterested: that is, that on a due attention to what there is in God, to excite our Piety; and in one another, to
excite

excite our Benevolence; we cannot help loving Both for their own sake, without any consideration of the advantage, the feeling these affections will prove of to ourselves. On reflection indeed we find, that a due prevalence of these affections produceth happiness to ourselves: and so far, as this effect of their influence is attended to, we shall be disposed to cultivate them from the selfish principle. In like manner, the consideration of our Benevolence being injoin'd by God, will dispose us to improve in it on the principle of Piety; and the consideration of the importance of Piety in promoting the public welfare, may induce us to attend the more to the grounds of our Piety from the principle of Benevolence. But still the affections themselves are wholly disinterested, being solely excited by the objects to which they are adapted. So needless, if this account be true, is the dispute, as it is managed by some, touching the disinterestedness of virtue; and so little foundation is there for the objections against Christianity on account of the rewards, and punishments, it makes use of as motives to encourage them; the meaning of such motives, consider'd merely as motives, being only this, to lead us to cultivate affections, which in their nature are, and cannot be other than, disinterested.

The

The concern therefore of our reason with these two affections, and with the other of Self-love, lies in the furnishing our minds with a proper knowledge of God, ourselves, and fellow-creatures; and in shewing, wherein our gracious Creator has made each affection consistent with, and promotive of, the interests, the others respectively refer to: in which view our Benevolence, in the extensive sense of it, recommended by our Saviour, as taking in our greatest enemies, will appear an affection as much adapted to the advancing the honour of God, and our own truest happiness, as the good of society; though it more immediately respect the latter.

That Benevolence is a natural affection, (which we have hitherto taken for granted) is best to be known by consulting our own hearts, what we feel; or, on the worst supposition, our memories, what we used to feel with regard to our fellow-creatures, as happy, or miserable; and by comparing what we so feel with the affection of Self-love, as we ourselves are either; and observing, whether the two affections don't discover themselves in the same manner, by taking place alike without labour, and by exciting in us, on like occasions, like passions for kind, however they may differ in degree.

That

That Benevolence to enemies is a natural affection, is to be known by those, who have ever felt it, in the same manner: to those, that have not, with regard to their own enemies, by what they have felt with regard to those, whom they have consider'd, as of the same character, but as enemies to others.

It is hardly to be supposed of the most selfish and cruel, that no compassionate case will excite their pity. However, no humane person, to be sure, can see a fellow-creature, supposing such creature not his enemy, in what he thinks to be misery, without it. For even as to actions, that are supposed the least to be pitied, such as, having villainy stamp'd upon them, naturally excite our indignation; persons the most abhorrent of all vice, keeping still to the supposition of no enmity in the offender against them, cannot consider, how much better a creature he once was, and by what gradual steps he unhappily attained to such perfection in wickedness, but it will take from the keenness of their resentment, and make room for some compassion. But if compassion to such be natural, as soon as what is compassionate in their case is discern'd, where there is no enmity, it must be natural also, where there is; the ground of the compassion being the same in both cases; what the offender is in himself, not
what

what he is in respect to those, whom he has offended.

But our Benevolence, even this, which respects our enemies, is greatly strengthen'd by our moral sense; that is, by the pleasure, which, as another effect of our make, is unalterably annexed to a consciousness of its prevalence; and by the displicency with ourselves, that as necessarily attends our consciousness of the want of it; and even, where we are ever so much degenerated, by the approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other, we feel in ourselves, as we discern them in others.

For let it be suppos'd, that we have made it our observation concerning any particular person, that it is his constant rule, with regard to any injuries done him, to put as favourable a construction on the conduct of the Authors of them, as there is room for; allowing as much as possible to the necessities they were in, or the misfortune of their education, or the weakness of their minds, or the surprize and violence of their passions; and that we find him heartily wishing, and, where he hath opportunity, endeavouring their recovery to a better mind; and so far as himself only is concern'd, not only heartily forgiving them; but returning them good for their evil: Can any of us see such a character exemplified without loving the person we believe it belongs to? Or can

we be conscious, it is our own, without an answerable pleasure in our approbation of the temper, and conduct, that make it so? And must not then a contrary character, discern'd by us in ourselves, or others, be attended with an answerable dislike?

Our moral sense therefore, what we immediately feel, without the pain of discourse, obligeth us diligently to cultivate this Benevolence, from the reward, we find, its prevalence carries with it; and as carefully to get the better of that faulty selfishness, which, when discerned, in like manner, carries with it its own punishment.

But our reason proceeds further, directing us to consider the relation we stand in to one another, as implying a real claim in us to some degree of one another's Benevolence, and to such effects of it, as are answerable to the degree we have a claim to.

We all of us wish, in some degree, to be lov'd by every body; and expect the practicable services of the love we wish for. Our expectations, indeed, will rise the higher, the nearer is the relation, in which persons stand to us. But there are cases, wherein we expect the friendly offices of even the greatest strangers. So in cases of provocation, or injury, if we are charged with crimes, we think we have a right to a fair trial; and, if found innocent, claim an honourable acquittal; or, if guilty, think it
reason-

reasonable, every circumstance, that extenuates our guilt, should be taken into consideration, that we mayn't be judged to be worse than we really are ; or be treated worse than we really deserve. Now so far as we judge these, and the like wishes and expectations from others, to be reasonable in ourselves; our reason must inform us, if we attend to it, that so far the same must be reasonable in others from us.

Difference in respect of relation, as we have hinted ; and the same is to be said of difference in point of moral character ; will occasion a difference in our love : And the impossibility of our answering the several claims, that may be made upon us at once for the effects of it, where they interfere, will oblige us to prefer some of the claims to others : In which cases it will suffice for our acquittal to ourselves, and to all reasonable persons, if, retaining the Benevolence due to the several claimants, we give the preference to their claims according to the dictates of our reason ; which, if impartially consulted, will direct to the proper distinctions, as they are acquaintance, or strangers ; friends, or enemies ; of principles friendly, and beneficial to society, or pernicious, and the like.

The meaning therefore of the command in the text, to love, and do good to our enemies, is not, that we should not have a


regard to these distinctions; but that, notwithstanding such regard, the worst of our fellow-creatures being still our fellow-creatures, and there being a Benevolence, which may operate towards them, and be productive of various advantages to them, without any detriment to ourselves, or to others consider'd as more deserving: Such Benevolence we ought to cultivate, and under its influence endeavour to procure them such advantages.

The reasonableness of this will appear more clearly, perhaps, on considering some of the cases, wherein there seems the greatest danger of our failing in this affection, and the most to be pleaded for such failure. I shall mention only these; the maintaining, or recovering our Right; and the punishing Offenders.

With regard to the former, the very supposition of Right, or Property, implies, there must be means that may lawfully be used to preserve it, while possessed; or recover it, if we be depriv'd of it. Were it otherwise, there would be an end of all government, and Right and Property would mean nothing. And the Apostle supposeth this, when discouraging the *Corinthians* from going to law before the civil magistrate, he directs them to refer their differences rather to judges chosen from among themselves *.

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* 1 Cor. vi. 1.



It does not indeed follow, that, because I may lawfully make use of these means; therefore I am always obliged to do it. *Cicero* * as well as the Apostle † advises, for the good purposes it will answer, to suffer ourselves sometimes to be defrauded.

Nevertheless there are cases, in which we are not at this liberty; such as the provision that may be due to the support of a family; maintaining the rights of an helpless orphan, or widow, and the like; in which cases going to law may be really an indispensable duty.

But however justifiable be our going to law, there can be nothing to justify our not loving our adversary; because on the worst supposition, that he knows himself to be in the wrong, we may certainly pity him for the unhappy influence he is under; and may wish for his sake, as well as our own, and that of society, that he were brought to a better sense of things; the consequence of which our Benevolence would be, that, restrain'd by it from all revenge, we should, without any detriment to our cause, possess our souls in peace through the trial; while he, who is as much concern'd to indulge his
D resent-

* Conveniet autem ——— in omni re contrahendâ, vendendo, emendo, conducendo, locando vicinitatibus et confiniiis æquum et facilem (esse), multa multis de jure suo cedentem: à litibus verò, quantum liceat, et nescio an paulò plus etiam quàm liceat, abhorrentem, &c. *Cic. Off. l. 2. c. 18.*

† 1 *Cor. vi. 7.*

resentment as to gain his cause, shall feel a perpetual uneasiness, and perhaps be tempted to make use of dishonest means to compass his ends, that shall make work for a most melancholy repentance hereafter, when, coming to cool, he shall call to mind the injustice he was guilty of; but had avoided, if, instead of consulting his passion, he had hearkened to the dictates of a more friendly principle.

As to punishment: Could we suppose, upon an offence committed, which is in its nature irreparable, that an assurance could be given, that the offender would never be guilty of a second, and that it would have no ill influence on any other person, to the emboldening him to be guilty of a like; were the crime ever so heinous, there could be no good reason assigned, for the inflicting on him any punishment at all; because no good end could be answered by it: the only one that could be assigned, would be, the satisfaction it would be to the injured, to see his adversary miserable in his turn: but that is mere cruelty, the very essence of it.

Punishments, even capital ones, are, undoubtedly, on the foot of reason, lawful; where the crimes are of such a nature, that the interest of society renders them really necessary: and *St. Paul* takes this for granted, in supposing the Magistrate to be
trusted

trusted with the Sword, on purpose to prevent them *.

But still, the only ends that can justify least, or greatest, must be founded in love.

Now, where love to the offender, implying a desire of his amendment, as his own happiness is concerned in it, consistently with the love due to the injured, and society, may be one motive to his punishment; is not that a sufficient indication, that it ought? which is the case in all punishments, that are *not* Capital.

And as to those that *are*: Can it be any disadvantage to the persons immediately injured, or society, that the injured themselves, and the other parties concerned in the proceedings against a criminal, are of such a temper, that hatred hath no influence over them to his disadvantage; but only a stronger love; and that, as the more reasonable prevailing over a weaker? In which case, while the stronger will engage a sufficient care for the interest of the public, the weaker will be strong enough to secure to the unhappy person a fair trial, and just sentence; and after them, some advantages, that no good man will find fault with.

Thus far, then, are we led to cultivate this Benevolence by the naturalness of the affection, by our moral sense, and by the dictates of our natural reason.

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But

* Rom. xiii. 4.

But Natural religion adds a distinct force to our obligation; for, where persons have, in consequence of a diligent inquiry into the perfections of God, and the conduct of his providence, brought themselves, as by observation, and their natural reason, they may, to a firm persuasion, that the perfection of goodness is to be ascribed to Him; and that he deals with his creatures, who are under his moral government, according to the direction of such his goodness; meaning kindness in the various favours of his providence, to all that are partakers of them; and punishing offenders only by way of amendment, or prevention: such their persuasion must strongly incline them on the foot of duty, as what will be expected from them, to exert their best endeavours to resemble the goodness, of which they so clearly see the perfection. And this very Argument, the Emperor and Philosopher *Antoninus* makes use of, in inculcating this Benevolence:

“ The Gods, tho’ immortal, says he, with un-
 “ wearied patience, continue, age after age,
 “ bearing with the wicked, notwithstanding
 “ the numbers of them, and the heinousness
 “ of their offences; yea, more, take all man-
 “ ner of care of them all the while; and dost
 “ Thou grow tired of bearing with them,
 “ who art so soon to have an end, and art
 “ one of those wicked thyself *?”

And,

* L. vii. c 70.

And, influenced by one or other of these considerations, or all of them, as aids to this Benevolence, several, in the Heathen world, have given affecting proofs of their having not only seen its excellence, but felt the pleasure of its influence in their practice. "Revenge is a passion worth gratifying, though one die for it," is a saying that occurs in an Heathen Satirist; but not as his own sentiment: he represents it as a maxim, too common, indeed, in his time, but as a very wicked one; such as his favourite Philosophers, *Chrysippus*, *Thales*, and *Socrates*, thought a reproach to human nature.

Chrysippus non dicet idem, non mite Thaletis
Ingenium, dulcique senex vicinus Hymetto,
Qui partem acceptae saeva inter vinc'la cicutae
Accusatori nollet dare.

Juv. Sat. xiii. v. 184.

But considering the great corruption of mankind, and how few on that account will sufficiently attend to these things, to their being influenced to a suitable practice, in comparison with the many that will not; this alone were sufficient to apprise us of the importance of a Revelation, to enforce even the commands discoverable without it, by a still stronger authority.

But this is far from being the whole of the case with regard to the Revelation we Christians

stians are bless'd with ; a Revelation, that, though principally designed to advance every single believer to the perfection of his nature, in order to his eternal happiness in a better state ; yet is as truly calculated, if rightly understood, to promote the happiness of civil society, as if it had no other view.

For it leaves to men the natural rights they were possessed of before its publication ; it leaves to private persons their natural right of judging for themselves in matters of conscience ; and to the Legislative power in every State, and to the majority of every lawful Society, their natural right of determining what shall be binding to the communities they belong to ; and obligeth every one that professeth it, to conform to what a proper authority enjoins in every state and society they are members of ; excepting in those cases only, wherein they shall really judge, that, by obeying man, they shall disobey God : and as it supposeth, that the various distinctions subsisting in life at the first preaching of it, would continue in the world governors and governed, in states, neighbourhoods, and families ; rich and poor, virtuous and vicious ; it directs its professors accordingly, not to forsake the world, but, continuing in it, to do, according to their several talents and stations, what shall lie in their power to serve it ; and qualifies them, so far as it has its proper influence, to be the
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most serviceable in it ; by strengthening in them every social affection, and directing the giving scope to them in such a manner, as shall be perfectly consistent with the best informed piety ; and, upon the whole, the most promotive of private happiness also.

It declares all the common favours of Providence, healthful and fruitful seasons, and the like, to be intended by God, in love to all mankind ; to his enemies, as well as friends ; to the unjust and evil, as well as to the just and good : and whereas, agreeably to our own melancholy observation and experience, it represents us indeed in a state of degradation ; and, what we could not have known but by revelation, in this state, by the wilful disobedience of our first parents ; it represents withal a discovery to have been made, early as the return of those our parents ~~to~~ a better mind, of a proper provision to prevent the fatal effects of their fall on all the well-disposed of their descendants, by the interposition of a Mediator*. And agreeably hereunto, though it declares, that there is not salvation in any other, because there is none other name given among men, whereby we must be saved † ; it declares withal, that this
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* Those who object against this appointment of a Mediator, will do well to read attentively Chap. V. of Part II. of the Bishop of Bristol's *Analogy of Religion, natural and revealed, to the constitution and course of nature.*

† *Acts* iv. 12.

most gracious Mediator was to be the Saviour of all men †, and a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, that sincerely should endeavour to keep God's commandments §.

Hence, agreeably to our natural notions of God, it affirms, that he has no-where left Himself without witness*; that he has everywhere notified his Eternal Power and God-head, by the things that are made†, and his Goodness in particular, by the advantages good and bad receive from the bounty of his common Providence ‡; that he has written his laws, those of universal and eternal obligation, on the hearts of all men** ; that, accordingly, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him ‡; and that, of these, there shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, who shall sit down in the Kingdom of God; while those, who shall have nothing to plead for themselves, but their having eaten and drank in the presence of our Lord, and his having taught in their streets, shall be commanded from his presence, for their having been workers of iniquity §.

Such is the provision the Gospel declares to have been made by the Divine Goodness, in behalf of all mankind : but how does this
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† 1 *Tim.* iv. 10.

† *Rom.* i. 20.

† *Acts* x. 35.

§ 1 *John* ii. 2, 3.

† *Matt.* v. 45.

§ *Luk.* xiii. 26, 29.

* *Acts* xiv. 17.

** *Rom.* ii. 15.

goodness rise, in the view of believing Christians! when, considering, that God, while he grants to every one sufficient means for the moral improvements he expects from them, may as reasonably distinguish some of them from others by greater, as he does Angels from men, and men from one another, in point of natural capacity: when, I say, considering this, they find themselves to be the persons thus distinguished, that to *them* is discovered this gracious provision, which for wise reasons hath been, and continueth to be, concealed from so many others; that to *them* the gracious disposition of God, and of the Son of God, to men, considered as enemies in particular, is not only in the most affecting terms expressly revealed, but exemplified moreover by such an amazing proof thereof, as the sufferings of the latter: God commending his love towards them, in that, while they were yet Sinners, Christ died for them*; and Christ his, by giving himself an Offering and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling Savour†; and that, in consequence hereof, to *them* are given such exceeding great and precious promises, promises of aids answerable to their needs, and of rewards beyond all wish and conception; that by these they might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust‡!

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Can

* Rom. v. 8.

† Eph. v. 2.

‡ 2 Pet. i. 4.

Can we wonder, after this, at our being commanded by our Saviour to love our neighbours as ourselves; or at his including our enemies in the number of those neighbours; or at his enforcing our love of these latter; as he does in the words following the text; that we may be the children of our Father, which is in Heaven; or at his making our forgiving them an indispensable term of our own forgiveness, as he does in the following chapter; or at his taking for granted, as in the Pattern for prayer, he hath prescribed us, he does, that his faithful followers will forgive them!

Upon the whole then: To have, as we Christians have, such enforcements of the love injoin'd us in the text additional to those, which arise from the consideration of our make, and of the suitableness of it to the dictates of our natural Reason, and those of natural Religion, as confirm'd by the sentiments and practice of several among the Heathens, who were unassisted by any external Revelation; and not to feel this love in our hearts towards *our* enemies, towards the *worst* of them, what a depravity must it argue, if we understand our religion; or what a wilful ignorance of it, if we do not!

Can we then, after this, call ourselves Christians, and fail of an immediate resolution to conquer, by the grace of God, those partial

partial angry resentments, which we find to be so contrary to the Genius and Spirit of the holy Religion we profess?

Good God ! What a blessed change for the better in Families, Neighbourhoods, Churches, and Nations, would a due prevalence of this humane and christian Spirit, in all that call themselves Men and Christians, produce ! and how happily, as has already been hinted, would it abridge the business of such meetings as this !

I cannot reconcile myself to conclude without one word or two, touching the singular goodness of God to us in this nation, in giving us our lot under a Constitution and Government, regulated and conducted, so conformably as they are, to the Benevolence we have been considering ; and concerning the Temper and Behaviour that become us, under the danger both of them are threaten'd with by the present Rebellion.

With regard to our Constitution ; it may suffice briefly to observe, as to our *civil rights*, that in no State is a better provision made for the security of the subject, as to his life, reputation, and fortune, our own Representatives having so considerable a share in enacting the laws that relate to them ; that by those laws provision is actually made, that every subject shall have his cause, of whatever kind it be, as fairly tried, as, in a

world so imperfect as ours, is possible; particularly in criminal ones, without the rack or torture to force from them a confession of crimes, of which perhaps they are innocent, or discovery of accomplices, when, perhaps, they have had none: and that in no case can they be proceeded against in an extraordinary manner, but by an act of the whole legislature: — and as to our *religious ones*, that the writ *de Haeretico comburendo* being taken away by statute, and the Act of Toleration pass'd in behalf of our Brethren, the Protestant Dissenters, subsisting, there are no penal laws complain'd of as in force against any peaceable, orderly subjects, on account of their religious principles, excepting against those, whose religious principles hinder them from giving the Government reasonable satisfaction, that they will always continue so: and that as to those which affect them, they were enacted, and continue in force, not from any ill-will to them, but purely on account of such inconsistency of those principles with the public safety.

With regard to the conduct of the Government in the administration of its executive power, on occasion of the present unhappy Rebellion, we have had, from very competent judges, most honourable attestations to the strict and constant adherence to the laws of the land of our gracious Sovereign

reign in all his measures, ever since his ascending the throne.

And the known liberty the Press hath for these many years enjoyed, notwithstanding the provocations the Government has met with by the many abuses of it from the disaffected; and the remarkable tenderness used towards the disaffected, even during this Rebellion, notwithstanding their religious principles are so opposite to the safety of a Protestant Government; are such honourable proofs of its lenity, as, perhaps, cannot in any other state be parallel'd.

To hazard therefore our lives and fortunes in defence of such an excellent Constitution, and of the Royal Protestant House, on whom, for its security, the Crown has with so much wisdom been entailed by the whole Legislature, for preserving to ourselves, and handing down to our posterity, the invaluable Privileges we enjoy, in opposition to arbitrary power and slavery, and to prevent a religion being forced upon us, concerning which I shall only observe, that the cruelties, by which it hath been supported, equally contradict the Religion of Nature, the Gospel, and the common Sense and Reason of mankind: to hazard, I say, our lives and fortunes in such a Cause, can never be inconsistent with the love we owe our enemies. For if War be ever lawful; and according to both Reason and Scripture it sometimes

times is so; Magistrates being, according to the principles of both, a divine appointment as well against larger combinations of enemies foreign or domestic, as against less, or single offenders; no war can have stronger reasons in its vindication, than, on our part, **This**; our Laws and Religion being manifestly at stake; that is, all that should be dear to us in life, with regard to ourselves, and our posterity.

Nevertheless, even to these enemies a Benevolence is undoubtedly due; 'a Benevolence, that, restraining us from the religious cruelties, we so justly abhor in others, shall, if it please God we subdue them, be contented with only such severity as our safety shall render really necessary; and which in the mean time, while the war is pursued with the vigour and bravery, which the Goodness of our Cause, and the Love of our Country and Religion, ought to inspire; and while our most ardent Prayers are directing to Heaven for our success; shall express itself by like ardent Prayers in their behalf also, that, brought to see the fatal errors, that have been the unhappy source of so much mischief to their country, and that have led them to a conduct so repugnant to both Natural and Reveal'd Religion, they may make their peace with God by a timely and true repentance; and submit themselves to the Government they have injured, and, if spared
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by it, become the peaceable subjects they should have been, and have a claim to our love as friends.

And let it not be imagin'd, that a disposition so favourable to our enemy will be of any disservice to our cause; for when a due love animates on the side of our friends, and necessity only, not hatred, determines against our enemy, there must be a thorough persuasion, that the cause we are embark'd in is a good one. And the tenderness we on this supposition retain for our enemy, while with reason we are cherishing a stronger one for our friends, will be the means of keeping the mind in a due situation, clear of those turbulent resentments, which must be occasioned by the warmest zeal for one side, and equal hatred to the other. And such a Cause, with such a Temper, must be the best foundation for that cool and steady Courage, which, however difficult to obtain, is confessedly of the greatest service in all sorts of danger.

I shall conclude with the Apostle's exhortation, as comprehending the whole of the Benevolence we have been considering; the force of which seemeth to lie in its being an Appeal to the common Sense of mankind, for the propriety and obligation of every particular recommended in it; and with
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the encouragement with which he enforceth it. *Phil.* iv. 8, 9.

Finally, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, let us think of these things, and do them; and the GOD of Peace shall be with us.



F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 5. line 12, 13. r. *deceased*; p. 6. l. 11. d. *they are*.